

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Please cancel claims 1-9.

Claim 10 (New): A process for the continuous production of crosslinked fine particles of an addition polymer gel, comprising

copolymerizing a monomer mixture, comprising

- a) one or more water-soluble monoethylenically unsaturated monomers,
- b) from 0.001 to 5 mol% based on the monomers (a) of one or more comonomers containing at least two ethylenically unsaturated groups, and
- c) from 0 to 20 mol% based on the monomers (a) of one or more water-insoluble monoethylenically unsaturated monomers,

wherein the monomers a), b) and c) are present as a 20 to 80% by weight solution in water based on the total amount of a), b), and c), wherein the copolymerizing is carried out in the presence of initiator at from 0 to 140°C by continuously feeding the aqueous solution of the monomers into a mixing kneader having at least two axially parallel rotating shafts having a plurality of kneading and transporting elements to convey the monomer mixture from an upstream end of the mixing kneader in the axial direction toward a downstream end of the mixing kneader in the presence of one or more addition polymerization initiators under an inert gas.

Claim 11 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein the monomer solution is conveyed through the mixing kneader with an inert gas.

Claim 12 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein the aqueous solution of the monomers is fed to the mixing kneader together with an inert gas.

Claim 13 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein the inert gas is wholly or partly generated by a chemical reaction in the mixing kneader.

Claim 14 (New): The process of claim 13, wherein the inert gas is wholly generated by a chemical reaction in the mixing kneader.

Claim 15 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein the process is carried out in the presence of water vapor.

Claim 16 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 15% of the heat of reaction is removed by evaporation of water.

Claim 17 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 25% of the heat of reaction is removed by evaporation of water.

Claim 18 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 45% of the heat of reaction is removed by product discharge.

Claim 19 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 55% of the heat of reaction is removed by product discharge.

Claim 20 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 50% of the total heat of reaction is removed by product discharge and water evaporation.

Claim 21 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 70% of the total heat of reaction is removed by product discharge and water evaporation.

Claim 22 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 90% of the total heat of reaction is removed by product discharge and water evaporation.

Claim 23 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein the fraction of heat removed by evaporation of water from the reaction mixture is not less than 5% of the heat of reaction and the fraction of heat removed by product discharge is not less than 25% of the heat of reaction and the remainder of the heat is removed via cooling of the reactor walls.

Claim 24 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein no heat is removed via cooling of the reactor walls.

BASIS FOR THE AMENDMENT

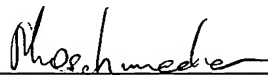
Claims 10-24 are active in the present application. Claims 1-9 have been cancelled. Claims 10-24 are new claims. Support for new Claim 10 is found in original Claim 1. Support for new Claims 11 and 12 is found on page 6, lines 3-8. Support for new Claims 13 and 14 is found on page 9. Support for new Claim 15 is found on page 6, lines 27-31 and page 7, lines 15-18. Support for new Claims 16 and 17 is found on page 7, lines 15-18. Support for new Claims 18 and 19 is found on page 7, lines 20-22. Support for new Claim 20 is found in original Claim 2. Support for new Claims 21 and 22 is found on page 7, lines 24-27. Support for new Claim 23 is found in original Claim 1. Support for new Claim 24 is found on page 7, lines 29-30. No new matter is believed to have been added by this amendment. The specification has been amended to include a cross-reference to the parent application.

The present application is a Divisional application of U.S. Serial No. 10/111,428, now allowed.

No new matter is believed to have been added by this amendment. An action on the merits and allowance of claims is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Norman F. Oblon
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 24,618

Stefan U. Koschmieder, Ph.D.
Registration No. 50,238

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/03)
NFO/SUK:asa